

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 07038 161759Z

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 IO-13 /070 W

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R 161248Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3424

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 7038

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, XD, IN

SUBJECT: MORARJI DESAI AND JAGJIVAN RAM RESPOND TO NIXON

VIEWS ON '71 WAR

REF: NEW DELHI 6977

1. BOTH PRIME MINISTER DESAI AND DEFENSE MINISTER JAGJIVAN RAM IN SEPARATE INTERVIEWS HAVE DENIED EX-PRESIDENT NIXON'S CHARGE THAT INDIA HAD PLANNED TO OCCUPY PAKISTAN DURING THE 1971 WAR. ACCORDING TO A SAMACHAR WIRE SERVICE REPORT, THE PRIME MINISTER WHEN ASKED MAY 16 TO COMMENT ON THE NIXON STATEMENTS REPLIED, "DO YOU BELIEVE IN HIM? IS HE CREDIBLE NOW? WHY DO YOU UNNECESSARILY THROW IT (THE QUESTION) AT ME?" AN AMERICAN CORRESPONDENT REPORTEDLY ASKED THE PRIME MINISTER IF HE WOULD "INVESTIGATE" THE MATTER SINCE MRS. GANDHI HAS SINCE BEEN DISCREDITED AT THE POLLS. DESAI IS SAID TO HAVE REPLIED THAT HE DID NOT SUSCRIBE TO THE

VIEW THAT MRS. GANDHI HAS BEEN DISCREDITED "IN EVERY WAY". HE ADDED, "I DO NOT BELIEVE MRS. GANDHI COULD EVER HAVE THOUGHT OF INVADING PAKISTAN. I WOULD NOT DO THAT INJUSTICE TO HER, WHATEVER MAY BE MY DIFFERENCES WITH HER."

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2. AT A PRESS CONFERENCE IN BOMBAY MAY 14, JAGJIVAN RAM WHO WAS ALSO DEFENSE MINISTER IN 1971, QUESTIONED WHETHER THE WORLD WOULD BELIEVE MR. NIXON'S STATEMENTS "AFTER A LAPSE OF SO MANY YEARS." RAM REPORTEDLY SAID THAT MR. NIXON AS PRESIDENT HAS ALWAYS WORKED TO CREATE UNSETTLED CONDITIONS IN THE SUBCONTINENT AND SPECULATED THAT PERHAPS THE EX-PRESIDENT WAS NOW PERTURBED BECAUSE OF INDIA'S IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH

THE UNITED STATES AND WITH PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH. RAM IS
QUOTED IN THE "STATESMAN" AS SAYING, "THE MALICIOUS MIND OF
MR. NIXON COULD NOT PERHAPS CONTAIN THE FRESH HAPPY
DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SUBCONTINENT." IN DENYING THE ALLEGATION
THAT INDIA HAD WANTED TO "GOBBLE UP" WEST PAKISTAN, RAM
SAID THAT INDIA HAD UNILATERALLY DECLARED A CEASEFIRE AND
RETURNED CAPTURED PAKISTANI TERRITORY.
SCHNEIDER

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Action: RELEASED
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